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The President's Daily Brief

May 28, 1974

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

May 28, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Yesterday morning the Soviets put an unmanned Soyuz spacecraft into orbit. (Page 2)

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Northern Ireland

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A note on light military activity at the Golan front appears on Page 5.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

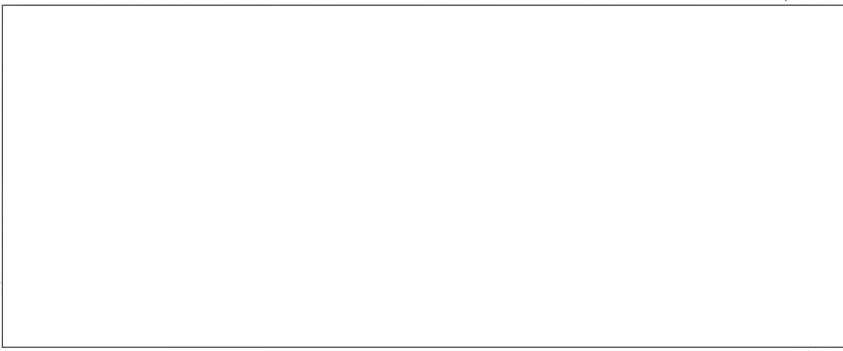
LAOS

*Buoyed by their recent successful efforts to prevent the opening of the rightist-dominated National Assembly, the Lao Communists have again seized the political initiative by proposing a comprehensive political program for the new coalition government. Unless the non-Communist side can pull itself together, the Communists will have established a pattern of leadership which the rightists and neutralists will have great difficulty challenging.

The Communists' program, outlined recently in a speech before the coalition's Joint National Political Council by its chairman, Prince Souphanouvong, indicates that the Communists will push hard to amend the Lao constitution and the nation's electoral laws. Souphanouvong focused considerable attention on the economic, social, and cultural development of Laos, emphasizing the need for self-reliance and self-sufficiency, but made it clear that foreign economic assistance--"with no political strings attached"--would be welcome. The US was singled out as having special responsibility for "healing the wounds of war in Laos."

Souphanouvong's program emphasized the strict neutrality of Laos, and indicated that the country would not take part in any military pact or alliance. He called for the normalization of relations with all countries regardless of their social or political systems, with top priority going to neighboring Indo-chinese states.

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Prime Minister Souvanna reportedly has agreed to sign the document on behalf of the coalition cabinet, but it is unclear whether all of its provisions have been thoroughly examined and approved by the cabinet. Pending cabinet ratification, the document will be forwarded to the King for final approval.

USSR

Yesterday morning the Soviets put an unmanned Soyuz spacecraft into orbit. Tass identified the craft as Cosmos 656 and stated that its purpose was to continue space exploration. During this mission, the Soviets will probably continue the testing of modifications to the Soyuz spacecraft, perhaps as part of the preparations for the joint Apollo-Soyuz mission scheduled for next year or for a mission involving a rendezvous with a Salyut space station.

In a previous unmanned flight in April, another Soyuz spacecraft performed a series of orbital maneuvers that may have been designed to test modifications in its control and propulsion systems.

NORTHERN IRELAND



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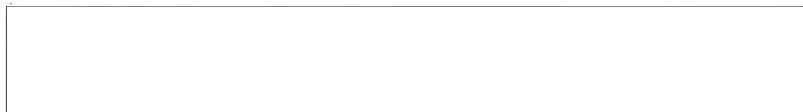


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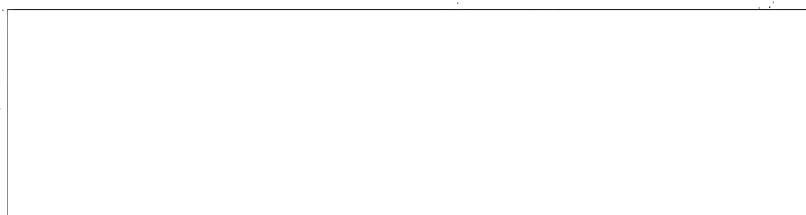
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NOTE

Israel-Syria: Military activity on the Golan front yesterday was light. The only air activity was a mid-morning reconnaissance mission by Israeli aircraft. Fighting resumed on the ground, according to a Syrian military spokesman. [redacted]

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